

## **FCC LAUNCHES MODERNIZATION OF E-RATE PROGRAM TO DELIVER STUDENTS AND TEACHERS ACCESS TO HIGH-CAPACITY BROADBAND NATIONWIDE**

### **SUPPORTIVE STATEMENTS**

#### The White House, President Barack Obama

“Today, the Federal Communications Commission took a first, important step toward realizing our vision of making 21st century classrooms available to every student in America. Preparing our nation’s students with the skills they need to get good jobs and compete with countries around the world will rely increasingly on interactive, individualized learning experiences driven by new technology. To get there, we have to build connected classrooms that support modern teaching – investments we know our international competitors are already making. Our ConnectED initiative – which has widespread support from Republicans, Democrats, educators, business and tech leaders and state and local officials – will ensure that the federal government can provide schools with the infrastructure and tools they need to deliver this competitive digital education for every student in the United States. That is the process that the FCC began today, and we look forward to the next steps in this effort as we move closer to our goal of getting 99 percent of America’s students connected to the Internet through high-speed broadband and high-speed wireless within 5 years.”

#### U.S. Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan

“I want to thank the FCC Commissioners for accepting the President’s challenge to bring America’s classrooms into the modern age with high-speed Internet. Their vote today marks a first step in a five-year effort that will have enormous benefits for students, teachers and families, and for our national competitiveness. Today, the bandwidth of the typical American school is far too low to support today’s learning technologies and demands. Thanks to the ConnectED effort, teachers will have new tools to tailor learning to students’ individual needs. Schools will begin to move beyond fill-in-the-bubble tests. Students—especially those in rural and geographically-isolated communities—will have access to a previously-unattainable world of resources, experts, and experiences. And families will be more closely connected with their children’s schools and schoolwork.

“The U.S. once led the world in connecting our schools to the Internet, but our strongest international competitors are surging ahead of us because they know that giving students and teachers the right tools is vital to their economic strength. It will take a lot of work by everyone to restore U.S. leadership and make good on the ConnectED promise: to bring the fastest Internet to nearly every student in America, and to put affordable devices in our students’ hands. The FCC’s action today starts us down that path. For that, the Commissioners deserve everyone’s thanks.”

#### Sen. John D. (Jay) Rockefeller IV, Chairman of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee

“I commend the Commission for voting to start a rulemaking to expand and strengthen the hugely successful E-Rate program. We must provide our schools and libraries with next-generation Internet connectivity so that they benefit from the rapid advances in digital education technology. The global economy demands an increasingly educated workforce with higher skills and strong backgrounds in science, math and technology. Our students must have access to high-speed Internet connectivity to gain the skills necessary to compete. I look forward to working with the FCC on updating E-Rate because every child deserves to be connected to the opportunities that this technology can provide.”

#### Sen. Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.)

“I commend the FCC for beginning the process of updating and strengthening the E-rate program for the future,” said Senator Markey. “Connecting schools and libraries with high speed broadband will help our country maintain its technological edge in education and our students succeed in the 21st century. With technology expanding into nearly every facet of our lives, we need to ensure our students remain connected and competitive in the global economy. I look forward to working with my Senate colleagues and the FCC to ensure we continue to make expansion and improvement of this program a priority moving forward.”

Rep. Anna G. Eshoo (D-Calif.), Ranking Member of the Communications and Technology Subcommittee

“I fully support the steps the FCC is taking to modernize the E-Rate program so that our schools and libraries can keep up with the digital demands of the 21st century,” Eshoo said. “Expanding the speed of broadband, not just availability, is essential to this endeavor, and the proposed rulemaking will help advance America’s classrooms and libraries. We live in a world where broadband is a necessity, not a luxury, for the next generation to learn and compete.”

AASA: The School Superintendents Association

“AASA: The School Superintendents Association, representing more than 10,000 school system leaders across the country applauds the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) of its continued leadership for the E-Rate program. By approving the E-Rate Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM), the FCC reflects the thoughtful comments, response and leadership of school and community leaders, parents, educators and students about the need to both preserve and update the E-Rate program, which is critical to supporting school connectivity and student learning.

“This action reflects the ongoing conversation between AASA leadership, school superintendents and the FCC and is an excellent complement to the President’s ConnectEd proposal to provide high-speed broadband connectivity to 99 percent of the nation’s students within five years.

“AASA looks forward to working with the FCC as we move forward with this rulemaking, and we are committed to the idea that the final conversation will include a permanent, significant increase to the E-Rate funding cap. The increased funding, in addition to accompanying programmatic changes, will bolster the long-term success of the E-Rate program and the students, schools, and libraries it supports.

“AASA welcomes the opportunity to continue to work closely with the FCC, Commissioner Rosenworcel and Senator Rockefeller throughout the NPRM process. E-Rate was featured prominently in our recent advocacy conference, and school superintendents are looking forward to provide meaningful feedback to the NPRM.”

Bob Wise, president of the Alliance for Excellent Education and former governor of West Virginia

“When it comes to accessing the internet, the nation's teachers and students are stuck on a two-lane road in an eight-lane world.

“This quick action from the FCC is the first step in a plan to provide 99 percent of America's students with high-speed internet access through next-generation broadband in schools and libraries within five years.

“Thanks to e-Rate, more than 95 percent of schools have some basic internet connectivity today, compared to just 14 percent in 1996, but just having access to the internet isn't enough; teachers and students need access to high-speed internet.

“There was a time when the nation thought that two-lane roads would meet all of its transportation needs. When demand exceeded capacity, the federal government acted to expand highways and ease congestion.

“The federal government needs to take similar action to speed up internet connections in the nation's schools and classrooms. Eighty percent of schools today do not have adequate bandwidth to handle modern education needs. That means the nation's teachers and students are stuck on the old two-lane model. And with more learning devices-laptops, tablets, smart phones, and more-those two lanes are only getting more and more crowded.

“By expanding high-speed internet in the nation's schools and libraries, the federal government can ensure that teachers and students have access to tools that make learning more personalized and more engaging, making it possible for all students to reach their learning destinations.”

Alliance for Excellent Education, The Center for Education Reform, Chiefs for Change, The Clayton Christensen Institute Digital Learning Now!, The International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL), KnowledgeWorks, The Learning Accelerator

“Today marks a renewed dedication from the FCC to ensure our students are truly prepared for both college and career in the 21st century. Far too many learning environments remain disconnected from the digital content and tools students need to achieve success in today's society. The leadership of Acting Chairwoman Mignon Clyburn and Commissioners Jessica Rosenworcel and Ajit Pai lays the groundwork for improving connectivity and access to engaging learning opportunities and a world-class education.

“It is imperative that education and telecommunications policy leaders work to re-energize our national commitment to ensure every student benefits from modern broadband access and increased educational opportunities. An update to the E-Rate program underlines the importance of harnessing the benefits of technology in all phases of a student's education.

“Teachers are personalizing learning using technologies to individualize instruction, expand access to content resources, provide feedback and use tools for deeper learning and problem solving. Together, new personalized learning models using technology are revolutionizing the way teachers teach and students learn and expanding the opportunities for engaging in world class content and knowledge and developing 21st century skills.

“We look forward to working with the Commission to update and revitalize the E-Rate program to support both new and ongoing learning opportunities for all students, help close persistent achievement gaps, and provide each student with every possible chance to achieve success -- in school and beyond.”

American Cable Association (ACA) President and CEO Matthew M. Polka

“ACA applauds acting Chairwoman Clyburn and Commissioners Rosenworcel and Pai for initiating this serious review of the E-Rate program. ACA has many local service provider members that participate in the program and many others that are experienced voice and broadband providers whose participation could enhance the value of the program. That the program has been valuable for schools and libraries is unquestioned. We now need to address flaws in the program and reorient it to deliver today's essential high-speed broadband service. ACA and its members look forward to working with the FCC to address issues and seize opportunities so the program continues, and in fact increases, its value for our country.”

The American Library Association Executive Washington Office Director Emily Sheketoff

“ALA has heard from dozens of our members sharing examples of what the E-rate program has enabled in our communities—particularly as it relates to meeting community employment, education and government online information and service needs. Library Internet access has been a lifeline and a virtual ladder for many Americans needing to stay afloat and move ahead in a time of economic turmoil and swift technological change.

“Now is the time to shift from making sure every library and school is connected to focusing on developing the telecommunications capacity desperately needed to support 21st-century digital learning needs. At the same time, we also welcome the opportunity to continue reforms begun in the last FCC order that will simplify the process so that more libraries can participate, and focus on program efficiencies that will maximize available funding.

“Finally, we must strengthen the E-rate program so that it continues to meet its mission of ensuring no one is excluded from the opportunities of the Information Age. The program must be adequately resourced. It is not sustainable that demand on the program is double the available funding—and actual need is certainly greater still. We must seriously

consider every avenue for improving this program so that libraries and schools have affordable and robust network capabilities available to them.

“ALA looks forward to this substantive and momentous policy conversation, and thanks FCC Acting Chairwoman Mignon Clyburn, Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel and Commissioner Ajit Pai for initiating the E-rate 2.0 rulemaking.”

Center for Rural Strategies broadband coordinator Edyael Casaperalta

“Rural schools need high-speed, reliable broadband connections so our young people have access to information and opportunity. Increasing funding for E-Rate, simplifying the application process, setting baseline broadband speeds of 100 megabits in rural schools and libraries, and ensuring digital education tools are affordable even to poor parents, are worthy goals. The conversation to improve the current E-Rate program is a very important for rural communities. As the Federal Communications Commission considers changes to E-Rate, the fact that 14.5 million Americans living in rural areas do not have access to fixed broadband networks and that 100 million Americans do not subscribe to Internet services at home must be part of the conversation. As we look toward digital educational tools, we must ensure that those tools are available, affordable, and able to be used in completing homework at home. Center for Rural Strategies looks forward to learning more about the proposed changes to E-Rate and collaborating with the Federal Communications Commission and appropriate agencies in ensuring that all students in our country have access to 21st century education and opportunity.”

The Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) CEO Keith Krueger

“Only a little over one month since President Obama announced his bold agenda, we are encouraged by the FCC’s steps to make ‘ConnectED’ a reality in classrooms nationwide. The sooner we raise E-Rate’s annual cap and equip schools with increased bandwidth, the sooner students will reap the benefits of true 21st century teaching and learning environments. This initiative moves our schools in that direction. We applaud the FCC and the Administration for making education technology a national priority, and we welcome this promising start for ConnectED.”

Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) Executive Director Chris Minnich:

“I commend the Federal Communications Commission for voting today to move forward on a rulemaking process to support improved technology infrastructure in our nation’s public schools and libraries. As I have said previously, delivering on our promise to prepare all kids for college and work in today’s connected world requires students to have advanced technological skills and access to technology. Many schools across the country lack basic necessities, like high speed internet, that many of us take for granted. Chief state school officers stand ready to engage and support the Commission as it seeks to expand student access to innovative and effective online tools and resources.”

The Communications Workers of America (CWA):

“The Communications Workers of America supports the FCC's action today to modernize the E-rate program to help provide faster Internet and telecommunications services to our nation's schools and libraries. We are particularly encouraged by the FCC's goal of ensuring higher capacity networks for schools and libraries and we support President Obama’s call to connect 99 percent of the nation's public-school students to high speed broadband internet service within five years.

“The E-rate program has been a big success and more remains to be accomplished. Since its creation 17 years ago, E-Rate has provided more than \$30 billion to connect the overwhelming majority of schools to the Internet. When the E-rate program first was established, just 14 percent of classrooms were connected. Today over 92 percent of all classrooms are connected. The program is funded through the Universal Service Fund.

“Our schools and libraries need much higher capacity networks to enable students to take advantage of the great potential of digital learning and new technological advances. Our goal should be at least 1 gigabit per second capacity to every school in our nation. Today’s FCC action is a good step forward.”

## EducationSuperHighway

“EducationSuperHighway congratulates the FCC on the start of its E-Rate modernization process. E-Rate has been a hero for our schools but needs to be updated to keep pace with the growing K-12 bandwidth needs in the 21st century. We hope the FCC will take this opportunity to ensure that the funding is available to connect 99% of America's students to the bandwidth they need by investing in fiber and ubiquitous wireless networks for our schools. At the same time, we trust the FCC will continue its excellent track record of continually improving the effectiveness of E-Rate by increasing the transparency of the program and simplifying the application process.”

## International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE®) CEO Brian Lewis

“ISTE is very pleased that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has heard the calls of educators, parents and students to launch this much-needed effort to update the extremely successful E-Rate program. Today's action by the FCC continues the momentum from ISTE's delivery last week of a petition signed by more than 1,700 educators urging the FCC to accomplish the goals of the ConnectEd initiative to provide high-speed broadband access to 99 percent of our nation's students. As the FCC embarks on this critical rulemaking, we urge the Commission to approve a significant and permanent increase to the E-Rate program's annual cap in order to ensure that our nation's students gain access to technology tools and graduate with the skills necessary for college and career success.”

## LEAD Commission Co-Chair, Former U.S. Department of Education Secretary Margaret Spellings

“The E-Rate program has provided tremendous benefits for rural and urban schools, public and private, and has helped bridge the digital divide across America... By updating the program, E-Rate can provide the funding necessary to migrate our schools from the current inadequate bandwidth to high-speed broadband in a timely, efficient manner. The effort to modernize E-Rate and build the necessary infrastructure will take many years, and must begin immediately.”

“It's high time to balance the equation by using technology to amplify educational opportunity. New technologies can help students access customized interactive instruction anytime, anywhere, at any pace – and can level the playing field for students regardless of geographic location or socioeconomic status.”

“This is a historic opportunity for the Commission to craft a modernized and strengthened E-Rate program, so current and future generations of American students can obtain the education and skills they need. Enhancing technology in our schools is affordable, it is achievable, and it is imperative if we, as a nation, are to compete and win in today's global economy.”

## LEAD Commission Co-Chair, Founder and CEO of Common Sense Media Jim Steyer

“Put simply, asking educators to improve student achievement in classrooms with 20th century internet access is like asking firefighters to put out a massive wild fire with a garden hose. This is all about American kids, and what we must do to provide them with the 21st century education and skills they need to join a tech-savvy workforce. And this is all about what our nation needs to maintain its competitive edge in today's global economy.

“With digital textbooks, online lessons, learning games and peer networks, we can help students enjoy better lessons in school – and at home, too. Real-time assessments can help teachers identify how each child learns, where he needs improvement, and which learning strategies suit him best. New online tools can also help teachers aggregate and display this data for the student and his parents, so that they can be more engaged in personalizing that student's lesson plans and monitoring his progress.

“...There is a substantial international movement to implement technology in the classroom. International leaders in digital learning, such as Singapore and South Korea, have nationally funded pools of technology-enabled model schools as a means to demonstrating the future of education. Even countries like Turkey and Thailand are working to put tablets into the hands of millions of students in urban and rural schools. As these and other countries are forging ahead, we are falling behind.”



The National School Boards Association (NSBA) Executive Director Thomas J. Gentzel

“E-Rate is a vital source of assistance for high-need schools in maintaining Internet connectivity, enhancing digital learning opportunities and helping school districts set and meet 21st Century technology goals,” said NSBA Executive Director Thomas J. Gentzel. “NSBA welcomes this opportunity to energize the process of updating E-Rate and meeting the needs of students and schools. To assure that E-Rate is successful, it is important to provide adequate resources to schools. Requests for assistance by high need schools and libraries are more than double the current resources in the E-rate program. NSBA supports efforts to ensure efficient operation and integrity of E-Rate, increase the quality and speed of connectivity in our nation’s schools, and address the technology gaps that remain.”

National Cable and Television Association (NCTA)

“As the nation’s premier broadband provider, the cable industry has built state-of-the-art networks that can provide powerful connections to homes, businesses and schools. We’ve partnered with the FCC and other organizations to promote broadband adoption for low income families through Connect2Compete. And we welcome the opportunity to work with the Commission on reforms to the E-rate program that will fairly and responsibly build a strong program to further enhance the role of technology in education.”

National Rural Education Association Executive Director John Hill

“The National Rural Education Association supports efforts of the President to extend broadband service to all schools, especially rural schools. The expansion of broadband provides rural schools opportunities to access a wider variety of educational offerings and services. Furthermore, the expansion will give rural communities additional tools for economic development and telemedicine.”

National Association of Federally Impacted Schools Executive Director John Forkenbrock

“The National Association of Federally Impacted Schools supports all efforts that will improve delivery of educational programs and curriculum to rural America. We support the President’s ConnectED initiative, which hinges to a large degree on FCC approval of expanding and modernizing the e-rate making it possible to connect rural America with the technology of the 21st century. Without the expansion and modernization of the e-rate, the ConnectED initiative will not have the impact on rural schools that the President envisions.”

John Windhausen, Executive Director of The Schools, Health and Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition:

“The SHLB Coalition is pleased with the FCC’s launch of the E-rate reform proceeding earlier today,” said “Every one of the FCC Commissioners recognized in their comments that schools and libraries need high-speed broadband capacity to meet the 21st century educational and information needs of the communities they serve. Their comments reinforce the fact that affordable, high-speed broadband for anchor institutions promotes economic growth and educational achievement. We welcome the FCC’s effort to upgrade the E-rate program, help our schools and libraries obtain the Internet technologies they need for the future, and make America more competitive in the global marketplace.”

The State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA) Executive Director Douglas Levin

“The State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA) congratulates the FCC on the move to open a notice of proposed rulemaking on the E-Rate program. Working in partnership with the states, the federal government continues to have a critical role to play in the deployment of high-speed broadband to schools, classrooms, and communities sufficient to meeting the evolving needs of teaching and learning in a digital age.

In the May 2012 release of The Broadband Imperative: Recommendations to Address K-12 Education Infrastructure Needs, SETDA set forth the consensus recommendations of state educational technology directors – based on research, best practice, trends, and expert opinion – establishing a target of external Internet connections to schools of 100 Mbps per 1,000 students and educators by the 2014-15 school year, rising to 1 Gbps per 1,000 students and educators by the 2017-

18 school year. Given that bandwidth availability determines which online content, applications, and functionality students and educators will be able to use effectively in the classroom, additional bandwidth will be required in many, if not most, K-12 districts in this country in the coming years.

If we are serious as a nation about employing digital learning tools to dramatically accelerate the preparation of all students for college and careers, a concerted national effort – including new funding and resources – will be required to meet the challenges the President himself has set forth in the ConnectED initiative. Today’s action by the FCC is an important step in the right direction, and SETDA looks forward to working with the Commission and others to ensure that the nation’s educational broadband needs are addressed swiftly and comprehensively.”

The Software & Information Industry Association (SIIA) President Ken Wasch:

“The E-Rate program has been a critical means for the nation’s schools and students to access the digital learning opportunities necessary for their success. SIIA applauds Acting Commissioner Clyburn and the Commission for their vote today to modernize and enhance the E-Rate program to better meet today’s needs and to better support our nation’s educational and economic competitiveness. SIIA looks forward to reviewing and responding as appropriate to the proposed rules to improve program efficiency and impact.”

The Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA) President Grant Seiffert

“E-rate has been making advanced telecommunications technology tools more broadly available since its creation in 1996. Students and library users who might not have had access to broadband received it only because of E-rate. The FCC deserves credit for looking for ways to refresh the program as technology evolves.”

Cisco

“In opening this rulemaking, the FCC has taken a major step toward modernizing the E-Rate program. Since its inception 15 years ago, E-rate has connected over 100,000 schools and millions of children to the Internet in all 50 states. It’s the cornerstone of America’s efforts to provide quality digital education to students, and its track record has been nothing short of amazing.

“But given the rapidly changing technology environment, E-Rate needs to keep up with the times and ensure that our children have the skills necessary to compete in the globally connected marketplace. Other countries are making major investments in digital education. For the sake of our children, we need to do the same. Cisco stands ready to work with the FCC to modernize and streamline the program.”

Comcast Corporation Vice President of Government Communications Sena Fitzmaurice (Tweet)

“We applaud the FCC for launching this proceeding to modernize the E-Rate program. The FCC can build on the substantial progress already made to bring high-speed Internet access to schools and libraries across America, and do so in a cost-effective way. Getting more Americans connected and closing the digital divide is a priority at Comcast. That means ensuring both high quality institutional connections at schools, libraries, and public computing centers, and also residential broadband connections so our young people can do their homework at home. Our Internet Essentials program has connected more than 600,000 low-income Americans to broadband, and Comcast provides high-speed connections to thousands of schools and libraries. We look forward to working with the FCC, other policymakers, and industry participants in the proceeding.”

Verizon Senior Vice President for Federal Regulatory Affairs Kathleen Grillo:

“We commend the FCC’s effort to update the Universal Service Fund e-rate program. Modernizing the e-rate program is an important part of the efforts to ensure that our education system will harness the power of broadband to change the way teachers teach and students learn, and prepare them to enter the digital economy. Verizon looks forward to working with the FCC to modernize this important program.”

